



## Wayne Leonard ("Cooper") Cooper

August 21, 1942 - October 17, 2023

Wayne Cooper Obituary  
Wayne Leonard Cooper

August 21, 1942- October 17, 2023

Wayne was born in Albany, Georgia on August 21st, 1942. He was the third born of eight children to Elmer Clenton Cooper and Mary Helen Canady Cooper.

He attended Tifton High School where he excelled in football, basketball, and baseball. He was the quarterback and team captain for the Blue Devil football team. He was selected all-state for two seasons and was named all-region for three years. He also served as the president of his senior class and was voted Most Athletic by his peers. Upon graduation, he moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There, he met Gilbert Ann Gooden. They were married and moved to Athens, Georgia, where he attended the University of Georgia to obtain his B.S. and M.Ed. Wayne and Ann welcomed their son, James Christopher while living in Athens.

Upon his graduation, he returned to his hometown of Tifton, Georgia with his family, where they welcomed a daughter, Kelly Ann. He was hired as the Director of the Intramural Sports Program at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural

College and began coaching the golf team. Under Cooper's leadership, ABAC's golf program flourished as they won the state title 21 of 22 years. Cooper was named Georgia Coach of the Year 21 times. He later served as both Athletics Director and Chairman of the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation of ABAC. He retired from ABAC in 1999 and later came out of retirement to manage Forest Lakes Golf Club for two years. He also managed golf operations at Spring Hill Country Club for several years.

Wayne loved spending time with his family and friends, playing golf, hunting, and fishing. He had many titles: Daddy, Pop, Coach, Coop, and Papa. He proudly wore each title and was a strong, steady force in the lives of the people who loved him. He instilled the importance of a strong work ethic and taught many valuable life lessons to all.

He is survived by his loving wife, Tonya, whom he married in 1993. They celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary in July. He is also survived by his children: Chris Cooper, Kelly Cooper Bagwell, Noelle McCurdy, and Braden McCurdy. Their spouses: Krista Cooper and Jeff Bagwell. His grandchildren: Kyle Christopher Cooper, Zachary James Bagwell, Nathaniel Cooper Bagwell, Linley Rose McCurdy and Aiden McCurdy. And his fur baby: Sophie.

He is also survived by his brother, Charles Alfred "Freddy" and Victoria Cooper. Their children: Tim and Brenda Cooper, Britt and Heather Cooper, and Robert Cooper. Their children: William, Lola, Megan and Mark. His sister: Shirley Susan Cooper and Bill Bottroff. Their son: David. His sister-in-law: Teresa Garrison Cooper. Her son and daughter-in-law: Ross and Kristen. Their daughter: Gabby.

He is also survived by his in-laws: Robert and Glennette Braden, his sisters in law : Robin Smith and Holli Braden. Robin's children: Statham and Lindsay Sapp, Langston and Sam Sapp. Their children: Jon Statham, LJ, and Weylon.

He is also survived by his first wife, Ann Cooper. Her sisters: Linda Taylor, June King, and Pansy and Joe Druzak. Their children: Greg Taylor and Julie and Paul Evans, Fred Oxendine, Derek and Cynthia Druzak and Brett and Jessica Druzak. And their children: Jake, Katie, Molly, Elijah, Lauren, Harmoni, Joey, Tricia, Charles, Nick, Michelle, Grace and Aaron.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his brothers: Elmer Clenton "Kenny" Cooper Jr., Jerry Lee Cooper, James Randy Cooper, his sisters: Carol Ann Cooper and Barbara Jean "Barbi" Cooper, his niece: Jennifer Oxendine, and his other fur babies: Brandy, Cindy, and Mocha.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Sunday, October 29th, at 4:00 pm at Spring Hill Country Club. The family asks that you dress comfortably or even wear a golf shirt in honor of Wayne.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make donations to the Coach Wayne Cooper Golf Scholarship by mail at Ameris Bank; PO Box 249; Tifton, GA 31794. (In person: 1911 Old Ocilla Road). This scholarship will honor his legacy.

An oak tree will be planted in his memory between Hole 1 and Hole 2 at Spring Hill Country Club, one of his favorite places.

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Wayne Leonard ("Cooper") Cooper, please visit our floral store.

[Read More](#)



# Tribute Wall

AC

“ *A Memorial Tree was planted for Wayne Leonard Cooper  
We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ the staff at Reflection Cremation  
& Funeral Service  
Join in honoring their life - plant a memorial tree*

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Wayne Leonard Cooper** - January 26, 2024 at 02:41 PM

JK

“ *Wayne, you were my first brother (in law)..I was very impressed with you from the beginning, but even more so after your service yesterday. The guys and Chris and Kelly spoke so very highly of you. So much love going to you from all of us Gooden girls. ❤️*

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**June King** - October 30, 2023 at 12:06 PM

LR

“ *Sorry for your loss. Prayers*

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**Libby Robertson** - October 26, 2023 at 12:08 PM

PD

“ *We will love you forever Wayne. So many sweet memories.*

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**Pansy Druzak** - October 21, 2023 at 09:23 AM